

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

1. (Original) In a method of playing a conventional or variant game of blackjack between a dealer and a player where the player is dealt two initial cards and the dealer is dealt a single initial card (the "three initial cards"), an improvement comprising the steps of:
  - (a) allowing the player to place a side bet;
  - (b) paying or collecting the side bet in accordance with a pre-established set of rules which cover all possible combinations of the three initial cards;
  - (c) and wherein the pre-established set of rules provides a winning side bet for the player where the sum of the three initial cards is greater than or equal to 19, but not greater than 21.
2. (Cancelled)
3. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 [[2]] wherein the game is played with at least three decks and wherein the pre-established set of rules provides a winning side bet for the player in one or more of the following circumstances
  - (a) the three initial cards are sequential and of the same suit; and
  - (b) the three initial cards are the same card and of the same suit.
4. (Original) The method of claim 3 wherein the only winning circumstance where the three initial cards are sequential are if the cards are 6, 7 and 8.
5. (Original) The method of claim 3 or 4 wherein the only winning circumstance where the three initial cards are the same are if the cards are all 7.
6. (Original) The method of claim 1 where in the pre-established set of rules provides winning side bets in accordance with Table 1 or Table 2.

7. (Currently Amended) A method of playing blackjack or 21, comprising the steps of:
  - (a) dealing two initial cards to a player and a single initial card to a dealer (the "three initial cards");
  - (b) allowing the player to place a side bet;
  - (c) paying or collecting the side bet in accordance with a pre-established set of rules which cover all possible combinations of the three initial cards, and which provides winning side bets in accordance with Table 1 or Table 2; and
  - (d) continuing with the blackjack game.
8. (Cancelled)